

Blackledge Stories

11:53 AM (April 21,
2017)

From: Peter Blackledge

to FmMikeVdec15Pr.

Mike,

How would you describe the Blackledge Stories and your plans for it ? An addendum to your excellent "Blackledges In America" publication? Will you be printing/publishing it? Please let me better understand your vision & plans so I can best respond.

Thank you ! Great job!!

Pete

Sent from my iPhone

Brother Pete:

Your inquiry absolutely delights me, for a number of reasons. First and Foremost, as we say in the dairy business, you are the first and the only person (to date) to ask a Question about the overall vision and plans for publication of *Blackledge Stories*. Secondly, perhaps just as important, your question indicates an interest and willingness to contribute. Thirdly, I have been requested to make a presentation on 12 July 2017 to Albuquerque Genealogical Society [AGS] on the subject of *Publishing Your Family History*, and I have been thinking about/collecting ideas on this subject for a while now. Thus, I am going to milk your 'easy' questions for an udderly lengthy response.

My vision as to look and feel: currently, on your coffee table (or perhaps in your bookshelf), you have "*Blackledges in America*" [BiA] – you are one of perhaps 20 individuals (and 5 libraries) that own both First Edition and Second Edition, the latter appearing in 3 volumes and some 3300 pages. I was one of a Team of 3 for those works; this new effort is to be compiled by me, from contributions such as yours and Penn's, several other contributors, plus some writing by me.

My vision is that "*Blackledge Stories*" [BS] will appear cosmetically as a companion volume (again, standard 8 1/2 x 11 inch pages) to BiA, and will in truth be compiled as a companion volume to those publications. I expect to use source notes for certain contributors (such as yourself and the twins) referencing their descendant number in BiA2 (something like: [BiA2 5:2406]) so if someone wants the genealogy of that individual, they can look it up. I hope to again use Erik Anundsen (Decatur,

Iowa) as my publisher [I say ‘hope’ as he is about my age, so who knows when he will go out of business], and I will use the [BiA2] bookbinder in Roswell, Arizona as the bookbinder. I will send the PDF files to Erik, he will print – what, perhaps 100 copies? – the book and send the pages to Roswell, who will bind it, with a cover of the same Navy-blue cloth material and gold lettering that you enjoy on the previous publications. Furthermore, I will assign an ISBN to the book – we purchased a block of 10 of them back in something like 1998, and they have no expiration date, so I still have 6 to use or ignore. If one does a Second Edition, a different ISBN must be used.

Genealogy vs Family History: Genealogy is the research and study of ancestral lines. *“Blackledges in America”* was over 90% genealogy. The few stories we included in the write-up (such as Babs’ story of telling her friends of how our father could walk around the block on his hands) really added quite a bit to the readability, such as it is in a genealogy collection. The photos added quite a bit. *BS* will be perhaps 5% genealogy. All the stories won’t be “Blackledge” stories – but there will be mostly stories in this book. Consequently, I picture it as topping out at about 200 pages – a much slimmer companion book to BiA and BiA2. And the other consideration is: how many to print? They get ‘cheaper’ [per copy cost] if you print more, but if you ‘know’ a 2nd Edition is planned, why print many 1st Editions?

Timing: The most difficult part of an open-ended non-fiction book project is the timing: when do you shoot the compiler and publish what you have? In an ideal world, I would create a (quite slim) First Edition of maybe 100 pages, and then, perhaps 4 or 5 years down the road, publish the expanded Second Edition which includes those 100 pages plus another 150 or so. But the Fire in the Belly may have been extinguished before 4 or 5 years pass – thus the timing for this First Edition may be crucial, as its publication may be the end of my Legacy project, and my publications in this Life.

Cost: At this point in my Life, cost is the least important of considerations for *BS*. I know ‘exactly’ what the cost was for BiA2: \$249 per (3-volume) set. I have toyed with the idea of having a \$10 charge per *BS*, as I don’t want to send them to folks who don’t want them – paying even a nominal fee will indicate their interest, as well as offset a bit of mailing and publication costs – but the important point is demonstrating interest.

Form and Function: In my vision, *BS* will include perhaps 100 small chapters. It will be segmented into four topical groupings: Family History [this will be close to genealogical write-ups, especially for Lewis Blackledge]; Family Stories [this will be perhaps the largest segment, including chapters on “Multi-Story Homes;” “Growing Up Blackledge” (most of your stories may end up here); “Growing Up Faust” (Helen and Jerry’s childhood in El Paso and on The Ranch); Other Stories (sorry, I can’t come up with a description of what this will be right now); and Publications. This last segment, Publications, is most interesting to me. I will include excerpts from

Masters Theses (I have mine, Mom's, Nick Woods – I need yours from DIA, i.e., your degree work you did while in Civil Service; and the twins' theses [Patti says I cannot call this section: Theses and Feces). And when I say excerpts, I mean excerpts: I am picturing a two page entry per thesis. Also in this segment will be excerpts from books, such as Andy Woods and Dick Blide's, and a bunch of Penn's Family Frenzies.

My problem here is in selecting what to publish. Nick's thesis is 164 pages, and my purpose is not to re-publish everything, just provide a 'taste' as we say in The Godfather 2. Some of Benjamin Franklin Blackledge's journal of unsuccessfully selling books door-to-door will almost certainly be included. I love that journal, even though it appeared in both BiA1 and BiA2.

Photo pages will be included, as well as a few embedded photos, as I did in BiA2; this was fairly much missing in BiA1.

Responsibilities of the Compiler: I already have a short chapter on the subject of "Alternative History" quoting KellyAnne Conway. Here is my tough job as compiler: when do I challenge my contributors, and say, "I'm not sure I can accept that story." One example we have recently discussed about your saying our father played football for Navy, and my saying, no he didn't. You clarified to say he told you he tried out [unsuccessfully] for the Navy team, which is a good story. Another one is your 'victorious race' at the IRA championships – did they do a championship for freshman boats, as Navy certainly was not victorious in the varsity heavyweights in 1966 (as you say, they were victorious in 1965, the year before you arrived). A more recent one is your BS #1, where you speak of Rodney and you 'taking your .22 rifles' – I know I fired a few .22 rifles at summer camps, but in my time at home, our parents never allowed/kept guns of any sort at 2307 Gramercy, other than Dad's Japanese rifle – was this Rodney's .22 rifle, or can you clarify? This is difficult for me, Pete, but important to me. This project is important to me! Certainly it is your story, but as compiler/publisher, this is what I must do! You understand my position, as [I hope] will the other contributors.

OK, that's more than enough - Pete, thanks again for your questions and your interest – and your stories!

- Mike

"Young man, I hear you and your friends are stealing goods. But you don't even send a dress to my house. No respect! You know I've got three daughters. This is my neighborhood. You and your friends should show me some respect. You should let me wet my beak a little... Tell your friends I don't want a lot. Just enough to wet my beak."

—Don Fanucci

